Forest cover in Punjab

254. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the remote sensing' reports regarding the receding forest cover in Punjab; and

(b) what Steps Government have taken to check the situation from worsening further?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): (a) According to the survey carried out by the National Remote Sensing Agency using satellite imagery, the loss of forest cover in Punjab during the period 1972-75 to 1980-82 was 621 Sq. Kms.

(b) Large scale afforestation programmes have been taken up in the State under various schemes such as Social Forestry including Rural Fuelwood Plantation, Farm Forestry, Soil, Water and Tree Conservation in Himalayas and Afforestation of Desert and Semi-Desert Areas and Raising of Forest Plantation in Govem-ment Lands. A pilot project on development of Kandi watershed, with World Bank Assistance, is also being implemented. Indiscriminate diversion of forest land for non-forest uses has been checked under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 Felling of trees in the Shiwalik hills, in-cluding private lands, is subject to a ten-year felling programme under the Land Preservation Act (1900).

Bills pending for president's assent

255. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MA-LAVIYA. Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some Bills passed by the State Assemblies and Parliament are pending for the President's 'assent; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof. since when they have been pending and what are the reasons for the delay in according assent?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS-(SHRl BUTA SINGH): (a) and (b) A Statemenet indicating information regarding the Bills passed by the State Assemble and pending for assent of the President as on 20.11.19X7 is attached. Processing of Bills passed by Parliament and pending for President's assent is not the responsibility of the Ministry of Home Affairs. *[See* Appendix CXLIV, Annexure No. 69]

Depletion of water-shed areas

*256. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA; Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the reasons for the depletion of water-shed areas in various parts of the country;

(b) whether downward trend in rainfall is on 'account of natural reasons or due to deforestation of land; and

(c) what measures Government propose to take to prevent mass scale felling of trees?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): (a) Faulty land use, difficulties in protec tion and heavy pressure of demand for wood and fodder are the major reasons for depletion of water-shed areas in various parts of the country.

(b) Scientific evidence to clearly establish that the downward trend in railfall is mainly due to natural reasons or due to deforestation of land, does not exist.

(c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. *(See* below)

Statement

Guidelines issued to the State Govern-ments/Union Territories to prevent felling of trees.

(i) Checking illicit felling of trees and removal of forest produce.

(ii) Enforcement of the provisions of the Indian Forest Act.